



House Continuing Resolution Would Shut Down Consensus Agreement to Restore California's San Joaquin River

The House Continuing Resolution (CR) passed on February 19 contains a misguided provision that would block implementation of the broadly supported San Joaquin River restoration program and order the Bureau of Reclamation to once again dry up the river. This provision authored by Fresno Republican, Congressman Devin Nunes would have broad negative impacts on the people of California.

Destabilizes a broadly supported agreement - The Joaquin River Restoration Agreement in 2006 ended 18 years of litigation and transformed one of the West's longest water battles into one of the largest salmon and river restoration projects in the nation. This landmark agreement between farmers, environmentalists, fishermen and the state and federal governments was achieved because the two goals of the agreement balance fisheries restoration with water management programs. Supporters of the restoration program include:

Friant Water Authority
The Bush Administration
Senators Feinstein and Boxer
Congressmen Costa and Cardoza
Governor Schwarzenegger
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern CA

The Westlands Water District
Environmental groups
Delta and lower San Joaquin River farmers and communities
Commercial and recreational fishing groups

Undermines a successful bipartisan effort. The restoration agreement was supported by the Bush administration and California's then Republican governor Schwarzenegger. The federal authorizing legislation was initially co-sponsored in the House by Congressman Pombo and Senator Feinstein in the Senate.

Wastes money. The funding for the restoration program is largely derived from fees paid by the Friant water users and existing California State bond funds specifically tied to San Joaquin River restoration. Defunding restoration would not only fail to create savings, it would waste years of effort and millions of dollars that are already available - funds that would create water supply projects, habitat projects, flood protection improvements – and jobs.

Threatens agricultural water supplies. Defunding San Joaquin River restoration would eliminate water supply programs and projects designed to benefit farmers and the regions agricultural economy.

Harms water quality for two thirds of Californians. Flows from the San Joaquin River will improve water quality in the Delta, a source of drinking water for over 23 million people and farms. Improved flows on the San Joaquin will also help restore the damaged Bay-Delta estuary, improving the reliability of water supplies for the water users who depend on the Delta.

After eighteen years of litigation, the parties decided that finding agreement was more productive than continued conflict. In the five years since the agreement was reached, flows have brought the river back to life, thousands of acre-feet of water have been recirculated back to farmers, and soon salmon will be reintroduced to the river to help revive California's commercial salmon fishing industry. The San Joaquin River restoration agreement is a successful example of the bipartisan cooperation that should be encouraged by Congress - not stopped in its tracks.